



CONCORDIA PROF SAYS ROAD SAFETY LAWS DO NOT AFFECT ROAD DEATHS

MONTREAL / March 13, 1989 --- Road safety laws in themselves have no significant impact on lowering road deaths, according to a Concordia University research team. Wearing a car seat belt may not only save **your** life, but it may also increase your chance of killing someone else.

Studies show that road safety laws such as lowering the speed limit and making seat-belt-wear mandatory tend to decrease the number of drivers who are killed. But the laws also give drivers a sense of security which makes them less safety conscious -- they take more risks, such as driving faster or recklessly, and more accident fatalities result.

The net result, based on recent American studies, is that road safety laws have no significant impact on road deaths, contrary to general belief.

Concordia Assistant Professor Richard LaFerrière, and Associate Professors Ian Irvine and William Sims will test the theory in Canada -- using the American studies as a guide -- on behalf of the Québec Transport Department. The two-year, \$15,000 study, which began last fall, will focus on Québec and three other provinces.

Law enforcement is an important factor influencing drivers' habits, says Laferrière. The steady decline of road deaths in Québec since 1973 may have more to do with enforcement than with the introduction of the laws themselves. One indication that Quebecers may be taking more risks following the 1978 introduction of seat belt and anti-speeding laws is that road deaths increased in 1978 and 1979.

- 30 -

Media representatives requiring additional information should contact Diane McPeak, Public Relations Officer, at (514) (848-4883).